

S.B. 251 – Serious Voting Integrity Flaw. You Can Correct That!

Government Administration and Elections Committee

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Testimony – February 29, 2016

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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a Certified Moderator, and a Computer Scientist.

The Secret ballot and Public Verifiability are the basis of integrity for our elections.

This bill and the related bill passed last year open a glaring hole in public verifiability.

You can correct that!

Last year, the General Assembly changed the election night reporting process for State and Federal elections to provide for an interruption in the counting and reporting of votes, ballot counts, and paperwork, delaying completion for up to 48 hours.

This bill would do the same for municipal elections.

Unfortunately, there was a glaring omission in last year's law that would be carried forward in this law – both should be corrected.

Both laws provide for the sealing of the ballots and materials between the temporary interruption and the resumption. However, neither provides for any public notice of the date, time, and location of the resumption of the counting.

This is a serious flaw which allows counting and paperwork to be legally accomplished without public observation. Public observation of the counting is a strong protection against error and fraud in election results. This omission risks election integrity and eliminates public credibility.

I suggest the following change in the text, similar to a change proposed this year in S.B. 252 lines 351-355. This text corrects the omission with a reasonable means for officials to provide that notice and for interested parties to find the date, time, and place for that counting to continue. Starting on line 96 of the current text of S.B. 251:

...voters. At the end of such temporary interruption, not earlier than nine o'clock a.m. on the day after the election, primary or referendum and not later than one hour after the registrars of voters publish notice of the date, time and location of the resumed canvass at the main entrance of the city or town hall and the office of the registrar of voters, the moderator...

Thank you,